

## Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 140485 TOSEC 060071

FOLLOWING REPEAT MADRID 4608 SENT ACTION SECSTATE 16 JUN 77

QUOTE C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 4608

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, SP

SUBJECT: THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SPANISH ELECTIONS

1. OUR OVERRIDING INTEREST LIES IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A  
DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM IN SPAIN AND IN THIS RESPECT I AM  
STRUCK BY THREE THINGS:

-- FIRST, THE MASSIVE PARTICIPATION, THE TENOR OF THE  
POPULACE AND THE CONDUCT OF THE ELECTIONS. ONE SHOULD  
NOT BE MISLED BY THE PREDICTABLE DELAYS IN GETTING OUT  
THE RESULTS, NOT

THE EQUALLY PREDICTABLE MISHAPS AND  
IRREGULARITIES IN SPAIN'S FIRST ELECTION IN 40 YEARS.  
THE VERY FACT THAT THESE PROBLEMS HAVE BEEN DISCOVERED AND  
ARE BEING REDRESSED GIVES TESTIMONY TO THE SCRUPULOUSNESS IN  
WHICH THE ELECTIONS HAVE BEEN CONDUCTED.

--THE RESULTS, WITH 70PERCENT OF THE NATIONAL VOTE  
IN STRONGLY SUGGEST THAT SUAREZ WILL HAVE A LARGE  
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PLURALITY (160 TO 170 SEATS, 46 TO 49 PERCENT) OF THE SEATS  
IN THE MOST IMPORTANT LOWER HOUSE, PLUS A DE FACTO ABSOLUTE  
MAJORITY IN THE CONFUSING SENATE RACE. THIS EASES THE  
TASK OF MAKING SPAIN'S NEW CORTES A WORKABLE,  
DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTION, EVEN THOUGH I DO NOT BY ANY MEANS  
WANT TO MINIMIZE THE MANY PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES  
WHICH MUST BE FACED NOT ONLY IN DEALING WITH URGENT NATIONAL

ISSUES BUT ALSO IN THE ACHIEVEMENT OF RATIONAL INTERPARTY RELATIONSHIPS AND AN ACCEPTABLE GOVERNMENT-PARLIAMENT DIALOG.

--THE STRONG SHOWING OF THE SOCIALISTS PROVIDES CRUCIAL TESTIMONY TO THE HONESTY OF THE ELECTIONS AND GIVES THE NEW POLITICAL SYSTEM NEEDED CACHET IN WESTERN EUROPE. TOUGH THE SOCIALISTS PRESENT MANY DISTURBING FACETS, INCLUDING THEIR NEGATIVE ATTITUDE ON U.S. BASES AND NATO MEMBERSHIP, NONETHELESS IT IS CLEARLY PREFERABLE TO HAVE THEM THE MAJOR PARTY ON THE LEFT RATHER THAN THE COMMUNISTS, AS IN ITALY.

2. SUAREZ WILL HAVE TO LEAD THE GOS IN A CORTES THAT WILL FUNCTION IN TWO TIERS, A CONSTITUTION-WRITING TIER THAT WILL PROBABLY BEGIN IN EARLY FALL AND A GOVERNING TIER THAT MAY BEGIN BY MONTH'S END.

--IN THE GOVERNING TIER, SUAREZ, APPARENTLY LACKING AN ABSOLUTE MAJORITY, WILL HAVE TO FORM SOME KIND OF COALITION OR ELSE RUN A MINORITY UCD GOVERNMENT AND CONSTRUCT CASUAL MAJORITIES ON PRESSING LEGISLATION, INCLUDING SOME KIND OF CORTES ACTION SOON ON SPAIN'S ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS. THE SIZE OF SUAREZ'S PLURALITY WILL PROBABLY DAMPEN THE TALK, OF A COALITION BETWEEN CENTER AND THE SOCIALISTS ON THE OLD GERMAN GRAND COALITION MODEL; IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES IT MIGHT BE TO NEITHER'S ADVANTAGE. A MINIMUM PARLIAMENTARY COALITION MIGHT ENCOMPASS CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS, CENTRISTS

, CATALANS, AND DEFECTORS FROM FRAGA'S CRUSHED ALIANZA POPULAR, THOUGH AP FIGURES WOULD NOT SEEM LIKELY CANDIDATES FOR CABINET POSTS. CONFIDENTIAL

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ALTERNATIVELY A MINORITY UCD GOVERNMENT COULD BE BUTTRESSED BY TECHNOCRATS, AND PERHAPS A RESPECTED PERSONALITY OR SO FROM SOMEWHERE ELSE ON THE POLITICAL SPECTRUM. THE THE LACK OF ANY KIND OF NO CONFIDENCE PROVISION IN THE STILL EXTENT FRANCO-ERA LAWS MAKES THE MINORITY GOVERNMENT A VIABLE OPTION.

--IN RESPECT OF THE CONSTITUTION A MINIMUM COALITION WOULD BE USELESS: WHAT IS REQUIRED IS A CONSENSUALLY BASED CONSTITUTION THAT ENDS, AT THE INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL, THE PROBLEM OF THE TWO SPAINS THAT HAS FESTERED FOR 40 YEARS. THIS CONSENSUAL APPROACH WILL REQUIRE SOME KIND OF CONSTITUTIONAL PACT--THE BROADER THE BETTER--THAT INCLUDES THE SOCIALISTS. AND IT WILL ALSO REQUIRE THE ACQUIESCENCE OF THE MILITARY (PARTICULARLY ON THE MAKE OR BREAK REGIONAL ISSUE) AND OF THE COUNTRY'S LARGELY CONSERVATIVE ECONOMIC POWER STRUCTURES.

3. THE INTERPLAY BETWEEN SUAREZ'S UCD AND THE SOCIALISTS,

MANY OF WHOSE YOUNG DEPUTIES ARE UNKNOWN QUANTITIES, WILL BE CRUCIALLY IMPORTANT. WE EXPECT SUAREZ'S LEADERSHIP AND THE REWARDS OF OFFICE WILL KEEP THE MOTLEY UCD TOGETHER AND THE GONZALEZ'S PRESTIGE WILL WORK TO KEEP MOST OF HIS DEPUTIES FROM STRAYING OFF THE RESERVATION, BUT EACH WILL HAVE HIS WORK CUT OUT. THE PSOE'S STRONG SHOWING EXCEEDED ITS OWN EXPECTATIONS AND ESTABLISHED THE PARTY AS THE UNCONTESTED LEADER OF THE SPANISH LEFT, A FACT THAT HAS MADE THE COMMUNIST LEADER, SANTIAGO CARRILLO, PLUMP FOR A UCD/PSOE COALITION IN THE THINLY DISGUISED HOPE THAT THE SOCIALISTS WOULD GET BURNED IN OFFICE. THE PSOE DID CONDUCT A BASICALLY MODERATE CAMPAIGN, THOUGH ITS RHETORIC AT THE RALLIES WAS MORE RADICAL THAN ON THE TELEVISION SCREEN, BRINGING IT MANY MODERATE LEFT AND NON-IDEOLOGIC PROTEST VOTES THAT MAKE THE PSOE'S ELECTORATE POTENTIALLY UNSTABLE. UPON THE PARTY'S PERFORMANCE IN THE CORTES AND UPON ITS ABILITY TO GROW A MODERATE WING  
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MAY DEPEND IT FUTURE ELECTORAL FORTUNES. GONZALEZ, NO IDEOLOGUE, IS ACTUELY AWARE OF THIS BUT THERE IS A RADICAL, THEOLOGICAL MARXIST STRAIN THAT TOUCHES THE LEADERSHIP AND PERMEATES THE PARTY'S ACTIVIST BASE. THE RESOLUTION OF THE PSOE'S IDENTITY CRISIS, WHICH COULD GO EITHER WAY, WILL BE VERY IMPORTANT TO THE FUTURE OF SPAIN'S POLITICS.

4. THE COMMUNISTS HAVE NOT DONE VERY WELL ELECTORALLY BUT CARRILLO HAS COME A LONG WAY IN GAINING RESPECTABILITY, THE FIRST ELEMENT IN HIS PLAN TO RECREATE IN SPAIN THE ITALIAN POLITICAL MAP. THEY ARE CERTAIN TO FOCUS ON MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS, NOW TENTATIVELY THOUGHT TO TAKE PLACE BEFORE THE END OF THE YEAR, THOUGH A POSTPONEMENT IS A DISTINCT POSSIBILITY. THE CONSERVATIVE ALIANZA POPULAR SUFFERED A DISASTROUS DEFEAT WHICH MAY END FRAGA'S ROLE AS A MAJOR POLITICAL FIGURE. THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS, SQUEEZED BETWEEN THE CENTER AND THE SOCIALISTS, SUFFERED THE FATE OF THE "NICE GUYS" WHO FINISH LAST, WHILE THE SPLINTER SOCIALISTS (PSP) OF TIerno GALVAN SEEM DOOMED TO BE ABSORBED BY THE PSOE. STABLER  
UNQUOTE CHRISTOPHER

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